



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

REVIEW OF FR. BULL'S *LUDVIG HOLBERG SOM  
HISTORIKER*

Francis Bull: *Ludvig Holberg som Historiker*. Kristiania, 1913. Pp. 181. The world has accepted Ludvig Holberg as a writer of delightful comedies and keen satires; but the fact that he was also a writer of history is not so generally known. The pursuit of historical study and writing was, however, the profession that the great dramatist claimed as his own. In 1730 he became professor of history as the successor of Arne Magnussön; but his enthusiasms for historical research dates from a much earlier period. Holberg's first published work was a general European history: *Introduction til de Europæiske Rigers Historier* (1711); later he wrote a popular history of Denmark, a church history, geographical descriptions of Norway and Denmark with a certain amount of historical details woven in, historical tales, and various other historical works of a popular type.

Literary students have not taken Holberg's activities along these lines very seriously; they have as a rule held that his historical writings were of little consequence even for his own day. But now comes the well-known critic Francis Bull with a study of these neglected works, in which he maintains that Holberg is entitled to a high place in Danish historiography. It is commonly held that the writing of history according to scientific principles began with Voltaire; but the author finds that Ludvig Holberg had worked out and applied these principles nearly a generation before Voltaire began to write. He was a diligent student of the sources; he took care to indicate his authorities in footnotes; he understood that events form a series of causes and effects. In applying his principles he was not always careful or consistent, however; he seems to have been impressed with the importance of the accidental in history, believed somewhat in the direct intervention of Providence, and sometimes found a convenient interpretation in destiny; but in most respects he is surprisingly modern. For his day and age Holberg was a historian of great merit.

The author has traced with some care the influences that helped to determine Holberg's method and point of view. He gives a somewhat extended discussion of his first historical work, the *Introduction*, with particular reference to the old charge that this was largely in imitation of Pufendorf's *Einleitung*. He finds that in the main the charge was well founded. In Holberg's more mature writings, however, there are but slight traces of the German influence. In his younger days he spent some time at the University of Oxford, where he doubtless gathered much material for future use; here, too, he became acquainted with such works as Camden's *Britannia* and Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*. Perhaps even more important for his future as a historian was Bishop Burnet's *History of My Own Time*. But while he grants the importance of the German and the English influence, the author is convinced that Holberg owed more to the French historians of the early eighteenth century than to any other group.

Jacques Auguste de Thou (Thuanus) was Holberg's chief guide in historical writing and research. de Thou wrote a vast history of his own time (1546-1607), universal in scope but with France and French affairs as the central theme. He was careful and critical and strove (often without success) to be impartial, and his work was long held in high regard. Holberg seems also to have been influenced by other French historians of the eighteenth century, especially by Rapin Thoyras, a Huguenot refugee, whose *Histoire d'Angleterre* was published in 1721.

"Holberg's historical writings show the limitations of his time and in many respects they might have been improved by men of his own day. But his spirit lit upon thoughts that point forward; and even though he was unable to follow these to the end, he came to be, in history as in other fields, one of the great pioneer workers. When *Danmarks Riges Historie* was published, there was scarcely another country in the world that possessed a history so inspiring, so sensible, so well written, and so new and modern in spirit as this great work by Ludvig Holberg."

LAURENCE M. LARSON.